



Current Issues in Prayer

January 2024

Welcome! The Pope invites people of good will to come together and pray **that the Spirit helps us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.**



Getting started:

I take a few moments to allow God's presence to lead me into a prayerful mood.



Short story:

Some time ago, I happened to be in a shop and overheard a conversation between two ladies. They were discussing the Parish bulletin and referred to sessions that were being held in the Parish centre on the topic of icons.

One of the ladies remarked: "Are they the work of the Pope? That is what people were saying." The other one replied: "Papas not Pope! A Byzantine priest. I attended the first session and found it to be very interesting."

Her friend remained aloof at hearing this and said: "Could they not have brought in a priest, as we usually do ... who is this guy anyway? I heard that he is married and has two children and that what he believes is different to ours!" The other was quick to respond: "He is a Professor at the University of Malta. He became a Papas in the Byzantine Rite seventeen years ago. Within this rite, married men may be ordained to the priesthood. He has studied a range of subjects and the style of delivering his lectures has been very well received. In fact, the Parish Priest has announced that the Papas will be having an active role during our monthly Celebration of the Word. The Byzantine Rite holds all that the Catholic Church believes but uses different rituals to express the faith. There are various modes in which people celebrate the faith and it is very important to respect these different practices and to learn from them. For example, have you ever watched recordings of the richly animated Masses held by communities in Africa, with their use of drums and dancing?"



Time to reflect:

Have I ever experienced the celebration of the faith in a rite different to my own? What are some of the common elements between the two different traditions? How do I feel while experiencing a new rite?



Let us pray:

Lord, give us the grace to appreciate how the diversity of rites may offer new opportunities for us to have a deeper understanding of our faith.



Inspiration:

The same Spirit both grants diversity of charisms and builds the unity of the Church.

Pope Francis



Hands on:

I try to find an opportunity to participate in a Mass that is celebrated in a different rite. I take part with an open heart and with the thought that, even though there exist a variety of rites, yet the same faith unites us as one community.